

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Society for the Diffusion of Christian & General Knowledge among the Chinese,

For Year ending October 31st, 1892.



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Report.

WE have been called during the past year to make strenuous efforts in behalf of our Society to infuse new life into its operations, and to endeavour to extend its usefulness. This required to be done, and we are pleased to say, it has not been without a measure of success.

OUR DIFFICULTIES.

First, let us notice that the parent Society in Scotland, which had rendered noble service in the beginning, with Mr. CUTHBERT as Secretary, was dissolved, and there was necessity for a new Society to be formed. It was needful too that the Missionaries and others engaged in connection with us here should be organized for our work, and their number increased for the expansion and greater efficiency of it. Recently the esteemed Editor of our Magazines, Dr. ALLEN, and Dr. EDKINS, an active contributor to our Magazines, have gone to Europe and America on furlough, and our Secretary here, has had to carry on the Editorship of the Magazines in addition to his own proper work of general correspondence and of preparation of suitable literature.

Happily we have been assisted by the Rev. Y. K. YEN and the Rev. G. LOEHR in some departments of the work, and thus so far have been able to carry on our Magazines.

The importance of providing suitable literature for so vast a nation at this crisis of its history is so great, that we heartily wish that the Rev. Dr. ALLEN who has had so many years of experience in literary work, and others highly qualified, could be almost exclusively set apart by their Societies for this great work, so as not to depend for help on Missionaries whose hands are already full with other duties.

ORGANIZATION.

As the old Society at home has ceased to exist, we are glad to say, that thanks to the kind services of Dr. MURDOCH, its place has been taken by the CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY FOR CHINA, the secretaryship of which has been kindly undertaken by Mr. DENHOLM YOUNG of Glasgow. It is hoped that the old contributors will continue to support the new Society. The Ladies' Auxiliary Society also, which did such good service under the former regime, we are glad to say, is still in active operation.

The CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY FOR CHINA having been formed in special connection with us, and being pledged to assist in carrying out the objects we have in view, it seemed all the more necessary that we should organize a course of work suited to the occasion, and which would increase and intensify the interest taken in our Society both at Home and in China. This has been done by organizing Provincial Committees of our Society which shall aid in the preparation and circulation of our literature among the ruling classes and *literati* of China. A list of seventy subjects covering the chief forces of Christian civilization was drawn up. Upwards of twenty friends, chiefly educational missionaries, have engaged to write on some of these subjects. The names of these with their subjects are published in our *Catalogue*. Our Assistant Judge and Consul, Mr. GEORGE JAMIESON, has kindly undertaken to write on Law. Some University Professors in England have promised to write on other subjects. Gentlemen in connection with the Custom's Service are writing articles. Several Ladies are also writing for the *Women and Children series*, funds for which are supplied by the LADIES' BRANCH in Glasgow. Besides this, a large number of other missionaries have volunteered to distribute our Literature at the leading examination centres of the Empire. All this has very greatly encouraged us.

PUBLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION.

The great Triennial Examination of the so-called M.A.'s throughout the Empire, competing for the highest literary honours in the land, was held last spring in Peking. Among these select candidates—the picked men of 300,000,000—we distributed gratis 5,000 copies of a

Treatise on the *Four Great Problems of the Times* viz :—How to support Mankind; How to secure Peace; How to build up Character; How to Educate. A book on the *Historical Benefits of Christianity* was presented to ten of the highest authorities in most of the eighteen Provinces. Our Magazine, *The Review of the Times*, circulates monthly in the leading official residences throughout the land. *The Missionary Review* circulates among the leading Christians in China. 10,000 copies of a *Calendar* containing much useful information were published and nearly all circulated in various Provinces. A *Catalogue* of our publications, with a list of the names of those who are preparing new literature and their subjects, was issued. Some of Dr. Faber's Chapters on *Civilization* have been reprinted separately.

A *New Map of the World*—shewing the different nations and their colonies—a *Diagram of the Religions of the World* and the number of their followers, the *Principles of English Law*, specially as carried out in China, and the *Education of Women*, have been published. The *Peep of Day* has been printed, according to promise made last year, by funds collected by the ladies of Scotland for distribution among their reading sisters in China. Nelson's *Illustrations of Scripture Histories* and *Floral Cards* with select Scripture texts have been published from the same funds. An outline of the *History of Thirty Nations*, indicating the leading features in their rise and growth is in press; so also is a treatise on the *Capacity of the Earth to support Mankind*, showing that Christian nations have discovered the means of producing support for mankind faster than their natural increase. Altogether during the year we have sold 12,163 copies of our Publications and 11,685, half of which were calendars, were distributed *gratis*.

The writing, editing, publication and distribution of our literature over such a vast Empire involves considerable outlay. Appeals have been issued for financial assistance, But the response hitherto has not been so hearty as we think our Society deserves. We have had in consequence to greatly diminish our *free* grants of books. To encourage sale we offer our publications at forty per cent. discount wholesale, in accordance with trade custom, but the published price must be such as to cover our expenses. Special free grants can only be made as our funds increase. Until the Chinese know the value of our literature it is very desirable that there should be much gratuitous distribution of it,

in order to hasten the development and regeneration of China. On this account two fresh appeals have lately been drawn up, one with a view to interest the commercial class, the other to interest the religious class. The result of these appeals remains to be seen. But we sincerely hope for considerable increase in our funds next year as we expect soon to have many valuable manuscripts for publication.

RESULTS.

What results can now be shewn?

One Chinaman in Canton has thought so well of one of our Publications, viz., *Treaties, Regulations and Proclamations*, that he has reprinted it at his own expense. We have had applications from ten provinces for our literature for free distribution,—from Chili, Shantung, Shansi, Kiangsu, Kiangsi, Szechuen, Chekiang, Kwangtung, and Yünnan. The missionaries of three missions in Amoy unanimously passed a resolution sympathizing with our object, pledging themselves to distribute our literature, and even to raise funds for our work if we drew up an appeal signed by representative missionaries. This was done, and is now one of the two appeals just mentioned going forth on its errand of mercy in behalf of China. One mission in Peking has offered to sell our publications for us there. Two of the leading Viceroys of the Empire have sent messages to say that they wish our Society every success. In the Provincial Courts of Kiangsu, the Mandarins have been discussing our aim and methods. The American Tract Society has sent us \$100. Mr. G. OLIVER JONES, a solicitor in Liverpool, has very kindly sent us a box of valuable books for translation into Chinese, while other friends have helped in other ways. Our good friends, Miss Harvie and her sister, on account of our suggestion that some might take up one examination centre as their own, have undertaken the distribution of our literature in one centre, which costs £20 annually. This taking up of examination centres we hope is only the beginning of many similar ones to follow.

THE IMMENSE NEED.

We must not forget the immensity of the need calling on those *who have the power to help those who cannot help themselves*. In some of our appeals we have said that the population of China increases at the rate

of thirty or forty millions every ten years, and that without new means of support these must perish at the rate of three millions annually from sheer starvation and exposure or become daily more wretchedly poor. Only a few days ago the Secretary had a painful confirmation of the amazing poverty of China from a Chinese Mandarin—a Magistrate who had sole charge of a county. During one year alone, he said that no less than 200,000 unemployed wandered through his county and of course had to be supported as they passed through to prevent them taking the law into their own hands. From this we may have an idea of how many millions are homeless and starving throughout the whole Empire. He further added that the struggle for existence is so desperate immediately to the north of the great Yang-tsze-kiang that people are known to commit murder to get even 10 cash—only one cent!

In the north of China roads are only open during the dry season of the year; in the wet season all transport overland stops for a month or two. Business men know the enormous loss this entails in a country so vast and so densely populated. Again, at least half or probably three-fourths of the transport in such a provinces as Shantung is done by wheelbarrows, some very large ones, one man pushing while another man and a beast are pulling. Often in the fields men, and sometimes women, are yoked with a cow or a donkey to pull the plough; in the south of China and in the west as far as Szechuen there are no roads at all for carts or even barrows but only paths; all transport overland for the teeming millions of these provinces must be done on the shoulders of men who toil day and night for the barest necessities of life, often trying to live on what is only fit for beasts. Thus many millions are mere beasts of burden and are harder driven than any slaves by their ever-present taskmaster—hunger.

All this while China is immensely rich in resources; but there is not one in a million that knows how to develop them for the good of the people. China's trade in a few years could easily be increased by eighty millions sterling per annum more than at present, if suitable reforms were only introduced. The produce for the support of the people could be made to increase faster than the growth of the population as in Christian lands. The key to the reformation of China in regard to every good lies mainly in the enlightenment of the rulers and educated classes, just as in all nations where the poor are illiterate.

Next year (1893) the Empress Dowager will be sixty years of age, and, according to Chinese custom, it will be a year of grace. Although it is not the regular year for Examinations for the higher degrees, it will be made an Examination year or Grace-Examination, as they call it, thereby giving an extra chance for promotion to office. By enlightening these students gathered at the chief centres of the Empire, we shall touch the spring of happiness of untold numbers of our fellowmen. One Provincial Examination centre will reach those leaders of one hundred counties, a Prefectural centre will reach those of ten counties. All good Chinamen would gladly help their fellowcountrymen if they knew how. *But light must precede reform.* We possess the much-needed light, shall we not give it to them?

Foreigners have often been appealed to in behalf of Famine sufferers in China and they have responded well. But the feeling is growing that if the *causes* are not removed, famines and floods will be chronic. We now appeal for the inauguration of a *new era* by shedding light on the *causes* and *remedies* of these troubles. When the best men in China fully know these things they will thank us more than for all the relief given; they will then take speedy action, and there will be no more perishing by famines and floods in China.

We propose to call special attention to the *economic value* of the chief factors of Christian civilization so as to elevate the Chinese materially, intellectually, morally, and spiritually.

If leading firms and philanthropic individuals were to follow the example of the Misses HARVIE in Glasgow and each to undertake the cost (100 Taels annually) of distributing high-class literature in one of the Examination centres—say beginning with one in each of the eighteen provincial capitals where practically the parliaments of the Empire meet,—then they would not only greatly help the rapid development of commerce in China, but also sow hope and light and gladness in countless homes. May many enjoy the high privilege and Godlike pleasure of thus helping the helpless!

Any funds contributed will be gratefully received and devoted to whatever departments of our work the contributors may desire.

Subscriptions and Donations.

NAMES.	TAELS.	DOLLARS.
Rev. W. Muirhead.....	10.00	
C. Thorne, Esq.....	25.00	
J. G. Purdon, Esq.	10.00	
W. Gard'ner, Esq.....	10.00	
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Herbert Smith, Esq.	25.00	
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W. Cartwright, Esq.	10.00	
Tls.....	200.00	275.20
W. N. Pethick, Esq.	25.00
Rev. J. Edkins, D.D.....	...	10.00
H. R. Hearn, Esq.....	...	5.00
Ven. A. E. Moule, B.D.	5.00
Rev. L. N. Wheeler	5.00
R. W. Little, Esq.	5.00
G. Jamieson, Esq.....	...	10.00
W. V. Drummond, Esq.....	...	10.00
J. D. Bishop, Esq.....	...	25.00
His Excellency J. H. Fergusson	25.00
		\$400.20

Receipts and Expenditure from 1st November, 1891, to 31st October, 1892.

To Balance as per last Account—		\$
Chartered Mercantile Bank Current Account.....	435.67	
Chartered Mercantile Bank Fixed Deposit	Tls. 479.53=	648.61
Agra Bank Fixed Deposit... ,	1,317.60=	1,800.00
	<hr/>	2,884.28
" Subscriptions and Donations as per list.....	400.20	
" " Ladies		
" " Branch	£100=	666.16
" " American		
" Tract Society	£20.10.8=	142.63
	<hr/>	1,208.99
" Sale of <i>Review of the Times</i>	744.73	
" Adv. " " "	322.44	
	<hr/>	1,067.17
" Sale of <i>Missionary Review</i>	313.13	
" " Books, etc.	592.02	
	<hr/>	1,972.32
" Interest on Current Account and Fixed Deposits	175.16	
	<hr/>	\$6,240.75

NOTE.—There is a further sum of \$636.80 due the Presb. Mission Press cover-
SHANGHAI, 16th December, 1892.

W. H. POATE,
Treasurer.

Audited and found correct.

ROBT. FERGUSON.

By Editor's Office Expenses.....	\$ 601.70
" Printing and Publishing <i>Review of the Times</i>	1,429.60
" " " <i>Missionary Review</i>	931.80
" " " Books, Circulars, &c.	495.58
" " " Ladies' Branch Publications	
" Reports	559.26
" Freight, Postage, Advertisement, &c.	30.00
" Expenses re. Dr. Williamson's Will	190.56
" Balance Cash in C. M. Bank	54.50
Fixed Deposit Agra Bank	19.49
Tls. 1,317.60	
Interest..... "	93.63
* Tls. 1,411.23	1,938.26
	<hr/> 1,947.75
	<hr/>
	<hr/> <hr/> \$6,240.75

* Held to meet claim by the Estate of the late Dr. Williamson.
on Press covered by accounts in their hands for collection.

The FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING of the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge among the Chinese was held on Thursday, 29th December, in the Municipal Council Board Room. Mr. J. G. Purdon, Chairman of the Municipal Council, presided. The meeting having been opened with prayer by the Rev. William Muirhead, the minutes of the former annual meeting were confirmed.

The Chairman said—They must all there 'be convinced that the Christian religion must in time prevail throughout the length and breadth of the world, and that it was what would civilise all mankind; and therefore he thought it was their duty to do what was in their power to attain that end. He knew it was often said we had enough to enlighten among our own people at home; and if those who said that would contribute to the home missions there was nothing more to be said; but if they did not even do that, their objection to contributing towards the enlightenment of Eastern nations fell to the ground. This Society, he thought, was one of the best means of making China familiar with the ideas and ways of civilised nations,—by interesting the *literati* of the nation. When they were made familiar with the progress of the arts and sciences, and what it had done for the amelioration of the people, it would most undoubtedly remove the prejudice which existed against foreigners as being Christians, particularly as they (the *literati*) must see that it was all done, not from any selfish motive, but with the Christian idea and motive of doing good to others. He thought that not more than one in a hundred in Shanghai knew the good work that was being done by the missionaries throughout this land, and by this Society. If they would not only read the Society's report but do what they could to further its objects, they would be doing a great work. He had much pleasure in moving the adoption of the report.

Mr. C. Thorne seconded, and the resolution was agreed to unanimously.

Mr. John Macgregor proposed:

“That this meeting regards with much pleasure the promise made by twenty friends to write on subjects connected with the general progress of China, and pledges itself to make extra efforts towards the publication and distribution of these treatises throughout the Empire; also, inasmuch as next year is one of grace, granting extra examination on account of the Empress Dowager attaining the age of sixty, we trust that a special effort will be made towards reaching a much larger number of students than usual.”

He said that those interested in the Society cherished the hope that going behind the literature which the Society circulated, the *literati* of this empire would realise the great cause of the progress made by Western nations. As a merchant, he (Mr. Macgregor) perhaps ought to notice one paragraph in the report, where a happy thought seemed to have suggested itself to the compiler, who had pointed out how the enlightenment, and consequent development of the resources of China, would provide the teeming millions with that sustenance which would remove those dread famines, so disastrous to the people and harassing to the officials. He hoped that funds (Tls. 100 for each centre) would be forthcoming to distribute this literature at each of the great centres of examinations.

The Rev. W. Muirhead in seconding the resolution, said that the *literati*, whom it was the object of the Society to reach, formed the spirit of the country at large. It seemed to him well to consider the standing of the literary classes as a whole. They simply were in the line of their predecessors, without making any advance at all, and the further back they looked they thought themselves the more honoured. With us it was far otherwise; whilst we paid all due attention to the progress which our predecessors had made, we were ever looking out for advancement, and making the progress we were called upon to do. The object of the Secretary in the programme he had sketched out was to have its various details put into Chinese and circulated through the length and breadth of the land. Both general and Christian knowledge were embraced by the programme, and a better list of subjects in keeping with the objects of the Society could not have been drawn up. The subjects, too, though based on the Christian ground, were most suitable to the literary classes, who were to be numbered not simply by tens of thousands but by millions throughout the country at large. Those he was addressing were aware of the examinations carried on in the provincial cities and there were multitudes of highly accomplished men who were in the habit of meeting at those examinations and who formed the *élite* of the population. Though the twenty different subjects upon which friends had undertaken to write were strange to the scholars, yet from the manner in which they would be treated by the friends in question, they would, he was sure, show themselves very well adapted to the requirements for the enlightenment of those literary men. When the essays were completed it would be necessary to have

them circulated far and wide, and it was gratifying to see that arrangements had been made for their wide and extensive circulation. As had been said, it was not simply by the missionaries who were engaged more particularly in the spiritual work, but by the Society with which those present were connected, that the general and Christian knowledge which they were anxious to communicate could be made known, and they ought to be very gratified that so many as twenty different friends were ready to bring forward those literary essays, place them in the hands of the Society, and put the organisation in a position to be so exceedingly useful in all parts of China.

The resolution on being put to the meeting was carried unanimously.

Mr. R. E. Bredon proposed:

“ That the following names be added to the list of Directors, viz., Messrs. W. N. Pethick, N. A. Siebs, G. B. Dodwell, the Rev. John Stevens, and Mr. G. M. H. Playfair.”

He expressed his gratification that one so qualified as Mr. George Jamieson had consented to write upon Law,—a subject upon which the Chinese were profoundly ignorant. Nothing could be more astonishing to those associated with the Chinese than the views of the latter upon European jurisprudence, and he thought that an explicit statement of its principles would be one of the most useful things to place before the literary classes. In conclusion he emphasised the fact of it being essential that all the publications of the Society should be in good classical Chinese.

The Rev. G. Reid, of the American Presbyterian Mission, Chinanfu, seconded the resolution as one personally grateful to the Society for what it had done. At the last literary examination in Chinanfu, various books intended for distribution to those gathered there were sent to him. However, and he thought perhaps happily, the books did not arrive until after the examinations. The reason he said happily, was, that he was able to distribute the books wherever he came across a person who had a literary degree, instead of doing so to the students on one day, when they rushed out of the halls and were anxious to get away to their homes. He had had a good deal of evidence that the books were greatly appreciated, and that they represented not an opposed creed or system, but what the Chinese regarded as learning or scholarship, and hence commanded respect. One of the most important works in China was the enlightenment of the literary classes, and that

could not be done merely by the missionary circle, but by all interested in the well-being of China.

The resolution was then carried.

Mr. G. M. H. Playfair proposed :

“ That besides the names now added, the list of officers for the ensuing year be the same as this year, with the exception of the names of those who have gone away, and that power be given to add to their number.”

In doing so he said that there was no doubt that of all the classes in China the *literati* was the one which stood up always, and under all circumstances, in opposition to the foreigner. As far as personal antipathy went the *literati* were the only persons who really bore it against the foreigner. The Chinese merchant—to use a vulgar phrase—knew on which side his bread was buttered; the inhabitant of the interior, who had imbibed no ideas from another class, was as willing to meet the foreigner as a native of any other country in the world. It was the one literary class—the student class, the class which had whatever education any Chinaman had, and who believed there was nothing to equal the literature and methods of bygone sages,—which abused the foreigner, and the reason was not that they were stupid, but that they were ignorant. It was to undermine that ignorance the Society had been founded, and he believed it was doing a work which, if it succeeded, would possibly change the whole animus of the Chinese towards the foreigners in their midst. It was really a good sign that all classes of foreigners were now joining together to offer to the Chinese educated class that knowledge which they required in order to enable them to understand how little they did know, and what little practical use their knowledge was to the general life of the world. The Chinese had to be taught that it was not merely the works of sages who lived hundreds of years ago that benefited men, or being able to give off fine rounded sentences, but that there were things which they never heard of which would make them happier. There was a class among the Chinese which had learned to appreciate the telegraphs, the railways, the steamboats, and it was when the literary man found out how much good that outcome of foreign knowledge was doing to his country he would give the foreigners a little gratitude for having brought it to his doors. It would be then that the foreigner would no longer dread the news that come down the river every summer, and hatred would have vanished from the native heart.

The Rev. Dr. Farnham seconded the resolution.

The resolution was put and carried *nem con.*

The Rev. W. Muirhead proposed a vote of thanks to the Rev. T. Richard, the Hon. Sec. and spoke in high terms of commendation of the work he had done for the Society.

The Chairman re-echoed these remarks, and the resolution was carried with acclamation.

The Rev. T. Richard in briefly replying, pointed out that in the pacification of India the government had had to issue a primer to be taught in schools, to remove prejudice; and if that were so under a friendly government, how much more so was it necessary to adopt similar means in China under an apathetic or a hostile government?

The Rev. Archdeacon Moule in proposing:

"That the thanks of this meeting be given to the Executive Committee for their kind services, during the year, and to those who have kindly contributed articles to our magazines,"

remarked in reference to what had been said, that he thought the literary classes deserved pity, for China was not altogether at their mercy. The democracy of China had enormous power, and however much the literary and leading classes of China were enlightened, the enlightenment of China would not come with a rush or a run. He had an instance of this during last summer in the neighbourhood of Ningpo where he was. After a period of drought a crowd of people went to an official *yamen* carrying a frog or something similar, which they wanted the magistrates to come out and worship. Two at least said they did not believe in such things and they would not do it, but they were forced, and those enlightened men had actually to bow down and worship the reptile. There was thus a certain amount of bondage under which the enlightened classes rested. Another case which had come under his notice was with regard to the Cathedral spire. A Chinese gentlemen, who had been to America and spent twenty or thirty years amidst foreigners, assured the captain of a steamer that the spire had pressed so heavily on the back of a great fish that it had come up again at the Woosung Bar. (Laughter.)

Owing therefore to the universal ignorance prevailing he would like to strongly emphasise that paragraph in the Report which suggested the desirability of every mission setting some one apart for preparing suitable literature for China.

The Rev. Y. K. Yen seconded the resolution, which was carried, and the proceedings terminated with the benediction by Archdeacon Moule.





